

Jobs Through Recycling Grantee Meeting
National Recycling Coalition Conference
Albuquerque, New Mexico
September 14, 1998

Introductory Remarks

Ken Sandler, of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), welcomed attendees to the grantee meeting and noted the meeting was designed to complement the Jobs Through Recycling (JTR) roundtable held in Chicago in April 1998. He stated the purpose of the grantee meeting was to provide an update of JTR activities including outreach, a new recycling economic information report, and the Recycling Technology Assistance Partnership (ReTAP). The meeting also was intended to provide an opportunity for attendees to participate in breakout sessions to discuss topics related to recycling market development. Mr. Sandler announced EPA is planning to conduct another roundtable in April of 1999.

Recycling Economic Information Report

Ed Boisson, of the Northeast Recycling Council (NERC), provided an overview of the national recycling economic information project. This project, a joint partnership between NERC and the National Recycling Coalition (NRC), will provide economic information on the nation's recycling and reuse industry. As part of this project, NERC and NRC will collaborate on a study to document basic industry size and economic impact statistics for 45 different categories of recycling and reuse businesses.

Jonathon Burgiel, of R.W. Beck (the contractor for the project), discussed the anticipated schedule for completing the project. Phase I of the study will target the 10 Northeastern states and is expected to be completed by February 1999. Based on this effort, the project partners will modify the methodology before conducting Phase II, which will target the remainder of the nation and be completed by November 1999. To collect the data, NERC and NRC will look at existing sources of information (e.g., trade association data) and conduct surveys for additional data. As part of Phase III, the project partners will customize data on both a state and regional level. The project will provide an opportunity for states, industry associations, and other groups to purchase statistics tailored to their particular geographic region or industry sector. One outcome of the project will be a database containing approximately 15,000 recycling and reuse companies nationwide. This database will draw primarily from national, state, and local recycling directories.

Q: How will you know you are capturing all the companies that handle recyclable materials?

A: We are targeting 45 business categories, broken down by standard industrial classification codes. In addition, we are hoping to estimate the net jobs created through recycling, although this is quite difficult because it will require accounting for jobs lost due to worker displacement. Overall, we hope to improve our methodology and data collection techniques over time. We might want to update the study on a state-by-state basis every few years but have yet to develop a long-term plan.

Outreach

Mr. Sandler announced EPA will be working with the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) on a market development project. Specifically, NCSL will prepare a series of two-page *Legisbriefs* on JTR and market development and distribute them to state legislators. NCSL also will conduct a focus group on market development policy. Based on the focus group and other research, NCSL will develop a state legislative report on market development programs aimed at state legislators. Finally, NCSL will conduct a session on market development at its national conference in Indianapolis, Indiana, in 1999. Once the NCSL materials are developed, EPA will distribute them to JTR grantees.

In addition, Mr. Sandler noted the future of JTR is uncertain due to budgetary issues. He encouraged grantees to spread the word about how JTR support has helped their programs, particularly in media interviews. He also encouraged them to forward articles about JTR-funded programs to their EPA regional contacts.

ReTAP

John Leigh, temporarily with CWC, provided an update of ReTAP, a joint EPA/CWC program, which recently received JTR funding. Now in its 4th year, ReTAP is designed to promote technical assistance in recycling technologies and markets through a variety of publications, best practices workshops, and information on new uses for secondary materials. In particular, Mr. Leigh described a new ReTAP initiative called the Technology Validation Project (TVP). Through this project, CWC will work with local service providers to provide third-party assessments and verification of recycling technologies.

CWC plans to issue a request for proposals this fall to identify recycling businesses interested in the TVP. To carry out the initiative, CWC will test technology and product developments and introduce strategic means of engaging new recycling market opportunities. CWC will document the results of the technology validation efforts in a final report.

Q: Who is CWC targeting with this effort?

A: The solicitation is open to recycling companies throughout the United States. The project is designed to help incrementally build information on different recycled-content products and technologies. As part of the grant, CWC also will conduct training in technology development and disseminate the results of the project.

Measurement

Sue Nogas, of EPA, described the Agency's efforts to evaluate the success of JTR grant projects. This year, EPA plans to complete evaluations of nine 1994 JTR grantees, as well as paper research for each of the 1995 JTR grantees. In following years, EPA hopes to continue the evaluation effort to better assess both the quantitative and qualitative accomplishments of JTR grantees. This includes "core" measures (e.g., jobs created, financing generated, capacity created, and capacity utilized) as well as anecdotes and stories related to barriers overcome and lessons learned. Through both site visits and phone interviews with grantees, EPA hopes to compile a full picture of JTR grantee accomplishments and publish the results in a series of fact sheets. The fact sheets can be used by both EPA and the grantees to promote project successes. She urged grantees to continue to carefully and regularly track their core measure results.

News and Announcements

Meeting attendees made the following announcements of upcoming events or program updates:

- The Chelsea Center for Materials Reuse has a new Web site located at <www.chelseacenter.org>.
- The Colorado Recycling Development Incubator is sponsoring an investment forum in Denver, Colorado, on November 10, 1998. Investment forums also are scheduled next year in Phoenix, Arizona, in March; northern California in April; and Los Angeles, California, in June. One is being planned for South Carolina in 1999, as well, coordinated by the South Carolina Department of Commerce.
- CRC is coordinating an urban agricultural center in Chicago, Illinois. The group also offers business development assistance and conducts policy initiatives.
- The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection is conducting an electronics recovery program for cathode ray tubes with JTR funding awarded in 1998.
- EPA's Region 2 staff are actively building a recycling infrastructure in the Caribbean. Another priority is working with New York City to pursue the establishment of recycling industrial parks.
- As a result of changes in political leadership in Colorado, the Colorado Office of Energy Conservation, and its recycling market development programs, might cease operations due to a lack of future funding. If this occurs, much of the agency's work in the area of plastics manufacturing would be coordinated by the state's recycling incubator initiative.
- Delaware continues to work toward its goal of institutionalizing recycling economic development and expanding its market development program, the Green Industries Initiative.
- Vermont is currently exploring the economics of feedstock conversion, as well as expanding composting opportunities and the use of recyclables in local projects.
- The Arizona Department of Commerce is planning its third annual buy recycled exposition and is currently updating its database of recycling companies. Once completed, the database will be accessible through the agency's Web site and will allow users to track the flow of recyclables in the state using a geographic information system (GIS).
- Minnesota's Recycling Business Assistance Center is working to establish an ecoindustrial park in the state by May 1999.

Breakout Sessions

Meeting attendees were divided into three groups to discuss the following topics:

- How to promote feedstock conversion
- How to effectively offer services to companies
- How to gain support from economic development agencies

Feedstock Conversion

This group focused on how to work with existing companies to switch to using recyclables as feedstock in manufacturing. Individuals offered the following suggestions and insights:

- Do not think of companies as “recycling” businesses, but as entrepreneurs. This is how they think of themselves. Also, understand companies focus on their bottom line, not necessarily the environmental benefits of their operations.
- Minnesota noted it is often a struggle to find companies interested in feedstock conversion. Colorado has generated interest with grants through its Recycling Development Incubator program. Another approach is working with trade associations such as the American Plastics Council. In Georgia, companies have approached the state looking for assistance in lowering material costs.
- Target particular commodities in your state or region based on existing supplies. This will help you prioritize the assistance you provide.
- Prove a particular technology works first and then promote it to companies. This lowers the risk dramatically and will help sell the concept of feedstock conversion to prospective businesses. New York, for example, conducted a plastics optimization project to demonstrate the new opportunities and technologies involved with plastics processing.
- Share information among states. Rather than reinventing the wheel, states can benefit greatly from the work done by others in recycling market development.
- Understand the technical issues involved with feedstock conversion, such as testing protocols and engineering issues. This will allow you to accurately evaluate the potential of new recycling technologies.
- Target small- and medium-sized businesses, as these are the most likely candidates in need of assistance. These companies often do not have the staff or resources to conduct the necessary technical research. Keep in mind, however, some larger companies also lack the engineering expertise to convert to using recyclables.
- Tailor your services to the needs of a specific company. When working with a company, walk them through the process step-by-step to ensure their support and input along the way.

- Work with universities in your area. Often, they can offer valuable technical support and access to new networks.
- Be aware of ISO 14,000 standards and how they might impact the companies you are assisting.
- Be creative in looking for opportunities. Minnesota, for example, is working to find new markets for fiberglass recovered from scrap boats in the state. In fact, Minnesota is currently organizing a feedstock conversion fund to further support its efforts.
- Look abroad for innovative technologies. Missouri researched recycling technologies used in Japan, Korea, and Brazil and continues to learn from these international marketing experiences.

Offering Services to Companies Effectively

The second breakout group shared successful strategies for providing business assistance, including the following:

- Offer comprehensive services.
- Actively refer companies to others in the state who can provide information (e.g., other agencies, businesses, or utilities).
- Share leads and trends in the region regarding feedstock availability.
- Develop a directory of individuals who can provide information on supply sources.
- Conduct outreach to companies by documenting success stories in business magazines, newsletters, and technical journals.
- Offer information on available financing programs (e.g., grants and loans) in your state or region.
- Remember, business retention is as important as business recruitment. Identify companies in trouble and provide resources to help preserve them.
- Stay active and look for clients rather than waiting for them to come to you. Be a catalyst for market development.
- Know your state, including market information, potential partners, and available resources.
- Help companies develop business development organizations to lobby legislators as well as establish materials exchanges and tax credits and other financing programs.
- Use the Internet and e-mail to conduct research, communicate with others in the field, and disseminate information on your program.

Generating Support Within the Economic Development Community

The third breakout group focused on how to generate interest among economic development agencies, including the following:

- Look at the mission of the agency (e.g., business recruitment or retainment) and determine how to incorporate recycling market development into its agenda. Educate agency staff about the economic value of recycling through success stories, including information on job creation and capitalization strategies.
- Prioritize your efforts based on the “top 10” companies or issues you can realistically address.
- Be willing to provide other environmental services (e.g., compliance or permitting assistance).
- Be open to nontraditional recycling commodities as well as companies offering environmental benefits beyond recycling (e.g., waste prevention).
- Garner support and interest from state legislators.

In addition, the group shared ideas on how to establish and institutionalize a recycling economic development advocate (REDA) position within a given state or region. The group offered the following advice based on the experience of the New Hampshire and Delaware grantees:

- First, establish a task force or steering committee to oversee efforts with representatives from several agencies and organizations. Include legislators to help generate buy-in and support.
- Next, be clear about what you are asking the economic development agency to do. Clarify your expectations and plans upfront.
- Approach your responsibilities from a service-provider standpoint.
- Look for a problem in the state a REDA could solve (e.g., serving as a state clearinghouse who clears federal grant proposals).
- Think things through from the beginning. Anticipate how the program will grow and evolve and how you will measure success.
- Secure testimonials from businesses.

Meeting Attendees

Arizona

Seth Hudson
Arizona Department of Commerce

California

John Smith
California Integrated Waste Management Board

Coy Smith
Materials for the Future

Colorado

Bud McGrath
Colorado Recycling Development Incubator

Kelly Roberts
Colorado Office of Energy Conservation

CRC

Mehrdad Azemun

CWC

David Dougherty

Delaware

Evadne Giannini
Delaware Economic Development Office

Eastern Research Group

Chris Benjamin

Georgia

Nick Smith
Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Hawaii

Carolyn Shon
Clean Hawaii Center

Kansas

Kent Foerster
Kansas Department of Health and Environment

Maryland

Virginia Lipscomb
Maryland Department of the Environment

Massachusetts

Robin Ingenthron
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

Amy Perlmutter
Chelsea Center for Materials Reuse

Michigan

Lucy Doroshko
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

Minnesota

Chris Cloutier
Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance

Missouri

Jim Hysori

New Hampshire

Jackie Badders
New Hampshire Department of Resources and Economic Development

New Mexico

Cathy Tyson
New Mexico Recycling Coalition

New York

Edward Campbell
New York State Department of Economic Development

North Carolina

Matt Ewadinger
Diane Minor
North Carolina Recycling Business Assistance Center

John Nelms
North Carolina Department of Commerce

Northeast Recycling Council

Ed Boisson

Oregon

Bill Bree
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

South Carolina

Ted Campbell
South Carolina Department of Commerce

Southwest Public Recycling Association

Mitra Khazai

Texas

Jose Caria

Texas Natural Resources Conservation Commission

Utah

Jennifer Ott

Recycling Coalition of Utah

Vermont

Carolyn Grodinsky

Vermont Agency of Natural Resources

EPA Headquarters

John Leigh

Sue Nogas

Ken Sandler

EPA Regions

Cynthia Greene

Region 1

John Fillipelli

Region 2

Todd Smiley

Region 4

Mary Setnicar

Paul Ruesch

Region 5

Tracie Donaldson

Shery Fuerst

Region 6

Moirra Derosa

Heidi Hall

Region 9

Eydie Pines

Region 10